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Boromir's Defense Mechanism in Lord of The Rings: Fellowship of The Ring

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze Boromir's defense mechanism and his characterization. This research applies several theory and method which encompasses characterization, psychoanalysis, and defense mechanisms. It is also aims to examine the types of defense mechanism used by the character. Data are collected from scenes of the film, dialogues, gestures, responses and facial expressions of the character. The field of the study are around the scene of the films of which the character appeared. Some limited history are also studied, collected from the film and biography from other sources. The result of the research shows that the character is considered as a representation of psychological state of human being. It shows the way human defend him/herself when facing problem. In the analysis, the character uses several defense mechanisms which is Reaction formation, Denial, and Displacement that made the character resist the temptation to harm his companion and being reckless.

Keywords: characterization, psychoanalysis, defense mechanism.

INTRODUCTION

Lord of The Rings is an epic fantasy novel written by J.R.R. Tolkien. As the sequel to the first novel, The Hobbits, Lord of The Rings tells about the journey of Frodo Baggins which is Bilbo's nephew to vanquish Sauron's ring. Because of the big success on the trilogy, adaptations into movies are produced.

There are several Lord of The Rings adaptation movie, such as the cartoon version and a trilogy directed by Peter Jackson who also directed the extended version. The most famous trilogy directed by Peter Jackson is the regular version (Not extended version) which later become one of the base piece of literature to make interest for the audience to seek more deeply toward the stories and universe. As a novel adaptation, there are missing parts from the novel, but some

parts are well interpreted into the screen casts and acting. Because there are many version and title, this analysis mainly focuses on *Lord of The Rings : Fellowship of The Ring*.

The first part of the trilogy which is The Fellowship of The Rings, is an *introductory* to the universe, races, and conflicts. Concerning about the race, there are many races that played important roles. The band of fellowship of the rings consist of elf, dwarf, hobbits, and humans. Although Gandalf the Grey has similar feature as human, he was a maia which is an angelic being. In this part of the trilogy, human races are not presented in many number. The only human that presents through the film is only Aragorn and Boromir. Both Tolkien and Jackson surprisingly brought out every races personality into every fellowship members especially Boromir and Aragorn. They are the part of the fellowship with each different traits. In the movie, Aragorn which was played by Viggo Mortensen portrays a man of focus and leadership towards the fellowship. Besides that, Aragorn is technically considered as the *good guy* in the movie but for Boromir it is different. Boromir could be considered as the part of character who made up a conflict in the plot of the movie. His desire for the ring, took over all of his control, even though his intention to use the ring was to save his people from destruction of the war. This shows an issue that makes him even more interesting than Aragorn. The issue that presented significantly by Boromir is his selfishness towards the fellowship which is one of the traits that Boromir struggles to control. His act and decision are complicated throughout the film that led into a conflict. The peculiar presentation of Boromir's character is the main reason to conduct this research. It is because he tried to fulfill his desire for the ring while at the same time he uses defense mechanism to boost his ego.

There are several theories used in the analysis: characterization, defense mechanism, and psychoanalysis.

In *Narration: Introduction to The Theory of Narrative* by Bal (1997) stated that 'character' in a piece of literature is a common denominator to a person. Moreover, literature made around people and about people. Her statement are critics to other criticism which declares that character cannot be considered as

a person or human being. But, Bal also declare that a character resembles some human traits such as psychological and ideological traits. With this approach, character could be identified as a person in psychological and ideological matter. Aside from that, the characterization could be achieved with this approach.

As the characterization has been identified the character could be analyzed furthermore with psychoanalysis approach. This analysis could be conducted because a character was considered as a person whereas a psychoanalysis is a therapy for a person who has a problem in their psychic.

Psychoanalysis is a studies of psychology around conscious and unconscious mind. Freud stated that there are three form of human psychic which is *Id*, *Ego*, and *Superego*. *Id* is part of unconscious mind and act as the source of psychic energy. *Ego* positioned between conscious and unconscious mind that acts as the executor of the decision which is the product of id and superego to begin a contact with external world. The ego also works with the defense mechanism complex in order to control or compensate one's own feeling which comes from both internal and external world. The *Superego* takes part both in conscious and unconscious mind and takes function as restrictor for the id action that would be taken by a person mostly to make awareness of good and bad values (Feist, 2013). This analysis aims to interpret the data to conduct the study and analysis to find the unconscious state of Boromir and also the similarities between Boromir and human nature.

Defense mechanism is an unconscious strategy used to avoid a direct sexual and aggressive impulse (id) and also to defend itself from anxiety. The way defense mechanism work is by forcing back the id impulses from emerging into consciousness or compensate it to give the impulse in acceptable way to reduce anxiety and to satisfy itself. There are eight Defense mechanism that Freud discovered (Feist, 2013). This method are analyzed by psychiatrist to recognize their patient's problems or 'illness' of the mind. The analysis of the character are also recognizing the objects through the action in the film in order to discover the defense mechanism. In the movie, Boromir repeatedly tempted to took the ring from Frodo. realizing that it was wrong, doing he resisted and often hiding his

desire. This action is a form of defense mechanism that was presented on boromir's peculiar personality.

METHOD

The data are collected from scenes of the film. Considering the research subject is a film, in order to collect the data, the movie had to be paused every scene that considered as data. The selection of the scene are based on the dialogue, gesture, event, and facial expression. These selection base are important in order to conduct the research. One thing to note that the film is an adaptation from a novel.

First, the data are studied and also the character's personality through attitude and response on some events such as action taken by the character, gestures, and facial expression. Then, after the subject is studied and the data collected, the data will be transferred into the research paper to do more study and analysis. All of data provided are purely taken from the character's action, dialogue, and history. The author of the book and the produced has no connection with the character except the actor. The analysis uses psychoanalysis and its defense mechanism theory by Freud (2013) and also Burgo (2012).

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Repression is the most basic defense mechanism in psychoanalysis. It is involved in each of the other defense mechanism (Feist, 2013). When the ego is threatened by the unwanted id impulses, it protects the ego itself by repressing those impulses and forcing the unwanted impulses back into unconsciousness. Sublimation is the repression of emotions and substitute it with cultural or social aim in acceptable way (Feist, 2013). For example directing the impulses into sport is much more acceptable socially and constructive for itself. Reaction formation works in turning an unacceptable feeling or impulse into its opposite (Burgo,

2012). After the unwanted or unaccepted feelings repressed, the way to compensate it is to disguise it into another form, specifically the opposite. Regression works when anxiety is too provoking, the ego might resort to a more comfortable psychological stage (Feist, 2013). Displacement redirects the unacceptable urges of the id into a variety of people or even objects, so the original impulse was disguised or concealed (Feist, 2013). Fixation is the permanent attachment from the earlier psychological stage. People who continually derive their pleasure from eating, talking, or smoking may have an oral fixation which means that the person has an unresolved problem in the oral stage of their life. Projection works when internal impulses are too threatening and produce too much anxiety, the ego may reduce that anxiety by attributing the unwanted impulses to another person or even an external one. Denial is a defense mechanism that works by neglecting the reality to avoid anxiety and unwanted feelings. For example, a man who was alcoholic might stubbornly deny that he was alcoholic and assume that he was healthy. Introjection incorporates positive qualities of the external object or mostly another person into their own ego. For example, an adolescent may introject or adopt the mannerisms, values, or lifestyle of a movie star. This introjection will benefit the adolescent and increase self-worth and keep feelings of inferiority to a minimum (Feist, 2013).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Boromir is one of the fellowship members as a volunteer from the human race, alongside hobbits, elf, and dwarf, to go into the quest to destroy the ring. In his first appearance, Boromir was arrogant, especially in the council of Rivendell where every race attended for a discussion concerning the ring. He tried to convince everyone to take the ring for him to use. He proudly believed that he would make a great deed out of the ring. While it seems to be a noble act, it is also a selfish act to take considering there are consequences that would harm the others. He only cares about his nation despite his alliance with other races. But despite his arrogance and greed, there are also good sides of him. His alliance with other races, especially the enemy of Sauron,

In this research, there are several defense mechanism used by Boromir in attempt to fulfill his urge and ego as the results of his natural id. Defense mechanisms that boromir uses are Reaction Formation, Denial, and displacement. The analysis will be in chronological order to convey Boromir's characterization along with his defense mechanisms on several occasions through out the film. In chronological order, places where Boromir present and uses defense mechanisms are Council of Rivendell, Anduin River and The Forest of Nen-Hithoel.

Council of Rivendell

Rivendell is an ancient elves city where the council regarding the ring is about to be held just at the moment when Frodo woke from his injury. In Rivendell, Boromir enters the room where the painting of Isildur fought Sauron and the shrine of broken Narsil. He enters the room without noticing the Strider who later reveal himself as the heir of Isildur. While Boromir embraced the memorial of Isildur in amazement he then finally saw Strider. At the moment he saw Strider he said "*No more than a broken heirloom!*" (Jackson, 2002) to show that he is disappointed at his own ancestor who betrays every race.

Boromir is a proud man who leads Gondor the city of human race. Although the city has no king, Boromir has to carry the burden of the city. He also admires his ancestors including Isildur who killed Sauron in the past. His admiration was portrayed at the Rivendell in the room dedicated to Isildur. But he also did not want to know that he admires Isildur including the Strider who is also in the same room. His sudden change of expression is a defense mechanism which is Reaction Formation. After he leave the room, the next scene is where the council held and every race attended.

In the council of Rivendell, Boromir believed that the ring should be used by his forces to fight Sauron. "*Give Gondor the weapon of the enemy. Let us use it against him!*" (Jackson, 2002) While everyone disagreed, he still stubbornly believe it should be used by the humans although it was considered a wrong choice that will bring every race into destruction. He still believed that no one could make the best deed of the ring. In this part, his personality and act are against everyone's will to destroy the ring rather than use it. This could be seen

when Elrond said it must be destroyed and then Boromir's face expression shows disagreement and disappointment. Although his suggestions are denied, he still agree to company the fellowship through the journey. In his scene his defense mechanism work to fulfill his ego to use the ring and to protect his own city which is Gondor from Sauron's attack which is the main villain of the movie. The type that are used in this scene are denial. He ignore the fact that the ring is dangerous when anyone uses the ring, but Boromir ignores that to get what he needs. His characterization is also identified when he found the ring.

Anduin River

After the fellowship leaves Lothorien, the elf city, they used boats to travel on the river named Anduin River. After awhile they stopped for a moment to rest and also because they realize that there are someone who followed them. During the rest, Boromir tries to convince Aragorn the leader of the fellowship to take a route near his city. Although Aragorn consider Boromir's persuasion as a reason to take over the ring and use it, Boromir insisted that no one believe human as an allies. *"Have you so little faith in your own people? Yes, there is weakness. There is frailty. But there is courage also, and honor to be found in men"* (Jackson, 2002) This is because in the past, Isildur as a human race betrayed Elrond's the elf order to destroy the ring while they had a chance to destroy it at once. Instead, Isildur took the ring for his own to keep. Thus the human race was considered or seen as traitor by the other races. Same as Boromir, he planned to take the ring when the fellowship reached Gondor. Boromir's action is a reason why he could be depicted as true human nature, where greed and desire could be done in every way, good or bad. In this scene, the defense mechanism he used are still the same as before which is denial. He still ignores the fact that the use of the ring could bring destruction everywhere.

Forest of Nen Hithoel.

Forest of Nen Hithoel is the final place of the first movie of the trilogy. The fellowship decided to rest again because the Forest is at the end of the river that goes down to water fall. They also still trying to evade orcs who hunted them. In the Forest Frodo walked alone without anyone followed him except Boromir.

There, Boromir boldly shows his love and loyalty for his people in a wrong way because of the influence of the ring. He still being denial that the only way is to use the ring to fight Sauron. Before this scene breaks, he ask Frodo to give up the ring. His desire and need are so great that he angrily displaced his stress to Frodo while also trying to take the ring. *"You fool! It is not yours save by unhappy chance...it might have been mine. It should be mine. Give it to me! Give me the ring."* (Jackson, 2002) In this moment, he's out of control and totally consumed by his desire. It is either because of the temptation made by the ring or his consciousness that his people are in peril and weighted to him for the responsibility and drive him mad. But one thing that could be noted is his loyalty for his people are undoubtedly great. in this part, Boromir was still denial. Another type of the defense mechanism in this scene are displacement. He is getting frustrated because he had to carry the burden of his own people and stressed because he had a chance to save his people by using his ring, he then yells and attack Frodo. His outrage is a displacement that was caused by his stress and deperation. After he attacked Frodo, he finally awake and regret his action. He tried to save Merry and Pippin from the orcs, but then he was overwhelmed by the enemy. He died at the hand of the Uruk-hai which is orcs. He deeply regreted every action that he took. And he confessed that he was wrong to try to take the ring from Frodo.

Boromir's Representation

Boromir's personality is the representative of true human nature in real life. His complicated personality and responsibility depicts of how human could be so greedy for their own needs. As Bal said a character could be a resemblance of a person although a character in narration is not real because they are just *made up* from imagination of the author. Bal declared that it is indeed not a real person but it resembles one which is psychological and ideological that made the characterization of the character (Bal, 1997). For some audience it may hard to divide between story character and a person. For example, Boromir's death could make the audience feel sympathy or indifference. In some parts especially in his first appearance, the audience maybe could take make an assumption that Boromir

is the bad guy of the movie, but as the course of the story goes he could be considered as the good guy. This the example that a character has psychological aspect that affects the audience too.

As for ideological aspect, Boromir only cares about his people and he believe that the ring would help him to restore their people's strength and legacy. That is an example although a story character are considered not a real person, but it carries some aspect that could convince audience that they are also person but not a person. While it seems to be a contradictive statement, a person of story character are indeed not fully considered as a person in real life. As for that, some audience could feel a relatable feeling because Boromir is also human. This relatable feeling could be considered as a stereotypical person (but not all) only if they are realize it enough as a human being. Therefore, Boromir shares common personality as a real person which could be considered as a representative of human's nature.

CONCLUSION

The analysis found that Boromir uses several types of defense mechanism through the course of the story in order to face his problems unconsciously. Those types are Reaction Formation, Denial and in the final scene he uses displacement. With separating the characterization of Boromir and a person, we can conclude that he could be considered as the representation of human's personality when facing a problem despite the fact that he was a fictional character. He also could be seen as rather realistic character of how a person mostly to be specifically human being. Also, most of the aspects of Boromir in *Fellowship of The Ring* could trigger an audience response into some relatable feelings such as sympathy and indifference.

Also by revealing his characterization, his psychological aspects could also be identified. Therefore, a characters in almost any work could be considered as a 'real' character that has many traits that match human life to conduct an analysis similar to analyzing a real person. With this findings, it will be much of a

help to conduct psychoanalysis as for this therapy are for a person or human. And finally, its defense mechanism could also identified.

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